Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

Grantsmanship Workshop Webinar
October 21, 2011

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Purpose and Procedures

- Explain the requirement for BFRDP applications and the review process

- Explain major changes from FY 2011

- To answer questions of interested applicants

- This session is being recorded

- Please type in your comments in the chat room window.

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Restrictions on Funding

Funding can not be used:

- To purchase land, large machinery, animals

- For the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility

- To begin farming

- Set up Individual Development Accounts.

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Basic Description of the Program

- The Farm Bill has made available $19 million in FY 2012 for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP)

- The recipient must be a collaborative, State, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of public or private entities, which may include: state cooperative extension service; community-based and nongovernmental organization; college or university (including institutions awarding associate degrees); or any other appropriate partner

- Funding only for education, training, outreach and mentoring of beginning farmers and ranchers.

Two Types of Grants in FY 2012

- Standard Projects - to develop and disseminate educational and training materials on 26 subtopics (grouped in 5 major headings in the next slide)

  - $250,000 / year for 3 years

- Educational Enhancement Teams – for evaluation, assistance and enhancement of beginning farmer and rancher education in the US

  - $250,000 / year for 3 years

Standard Projects could relate to any one or more of the 26 subtopics under the following:

Production and management strategies to enhance land stewardship by beginning farmers and ranchers.

Business management and decision support strategies that enhance the financial viability of beginning farmers and ranchers

Marketing strategies that enhance the competitiveness of beginning farmers and ranchers.

Legal strategies that assist beginning farmers with farm or land acquisition and transfer.

Other Priority Topics to enhance competitiveness and sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers for the next generation.

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Educational Enhancement Projects

- Establish evaluation teams – expertise from CBOs, NGOs, USDA, Universities, state agencies, etc.

- Evaluate curriculums – identify gaps, develop new curriculums to address these gaps, disseminate findings, conduct train-the-trainer kinds of activities

- Evaluate Programs – identify best practices, identify gaps, disseminate findings, conduct train-the-trainer activities

- Serve as a technical resource for beginning farmer and rancher education

- May be focused on a region, commodity, technology, etc.

Other Funding Priorities

- Priority - to partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental and community-based organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach

- At least 25 percent of funds awarded to the standard projects for a fiscal year shall support programs and services that address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers or ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers.

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Major changes from Previous Years

- Only applications with a minimum of 25 percent of the Federal budget allocated to partner organizations (i.e., NGOs and CBOs) will be given priority.

- Greater emphasis on multi-year track record - need data to validate successful experience

- No applications from 4-year degree granting educational institutions for developing curriculum

- Greater emphasis on the plan for outcome based reporting

- Greater emphasis on replicable projects

Major changes from Previous Years

- **Development Grants:**
  - to sustain and enhance important collaborations and innovative activities relevant to beginning farmer and rancher programs; and
  - to initiate and develop beginning farmer and rancher project ideas to lead to future program success or success in obtaining other grants for beginning farmer and rancher education.

  - Development grants are only available to organizations that have not previously been successful in obtaining competitive standard grants from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (or its predecessor, the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)).

Major changes from Previous Years

- **Renewal Application:**
  - Application funded previously but is requesting for additional accomplishment-based funding for a subsequent period.
    - Proposal similar to other applications, with same sections
    - Progress made during initial award – submit CRIS reports
    - Include a plan for continuous improvement

  - Several projects funded in 2009 have completed 2 years; but need to have made significant impacts and have a plan for improvement

  - Priority may be given to renewal applications

  - Increases accountability.

Major changes from Previous Years

- **Resubmitted application**
  - Application previously submitted but not funded by BFRDP or was funded as a development grant.

  - will be reviewed using the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

  - reviewers will evaluate how well the prior panel's concerns were addressed in the resubmitted application and/or during the development grant.

Proposal Submission Requirements

- Applications require 25% matching

- Only electronic applications through grants.gov are accepted

- Need to follow all guidelines published in the Request for Applications

- Deadline of November 22 @ 5 p.m. eastern standard time (EST).

Question # 1

Is this grant for you?

- Is this what you want to do?

- Are you eligible?

- Can you provide the matching?

- Can you submit through grants.gov?

- Can you submit by the deadline?

If you decide to apply…

- **Register with Grants.Gov** - ASAP
  http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp

  - This process can take weeks to complete

- **Check on Computer essentials**

  - Adobe Reader – only .pdf is accepted

  - High speed connection – universities, county extension or libraries.

  - Read the Request for Applications on our website

- **Contact the NPL's if you have questions regarding program**

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Application Process

- **Download the Application Package**
  http://www.grants.gov

- **Complete the Mandatory Documents**
  - Looks like forms, but some also need pdf attachments (e.g., project narrative, project summary)
  - Annual and cumulative budgets need to be provided
    - Separate budget forms for partners;
  - Submit all information requested in RFA –
    - Grants.gov is for all federal agencies
    - RFA is for BFRDP.

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Application Process – Contd.

Prepare the project summary pages 19 & 20 of RFA

- Crucial - helps reviewers grasp the essence of your proposal

- Follow the format - provide all requested information in the requested order.

Application Process – Contd.

- **Write components of the narrative**
  - See RFA – Page 20 - 25
    - Introduction – need for the project, prior experience,
    - Objectives and outcomes
    - Approach - activities, outcomes, pitfalls, timeline
    - Target Audience
  - Bibliography
  - Plan for outcomes based reporting
  - Management Plan
  - Collaboration
  - Personnel data.
  - New requirements for Resubmitted Applications
  - New requirements for Renewal Applications

Application Process – Contd.

- **Submit electronically through** www.grants.gov

  - All attachments MUST be submitted in PDF

    - Check all documents after conversion to PDF

    - Attachments must be converted to PDFs prior to attaching to Adobe

  - Submit at least a week ahead

  - Grants.gov customer support:

    - 1-800-518-4726; M-F 7:00 am – 9 pm Eastern Time;

    - Email: support@grants.gov .

    - Get a Case ID # if you are having submission problems.

Budget, Matching and Other Requirements

Adriene Woodin

Awards Management Division

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Topics

- **Matching Regulations**

- **Programmatic Requirements**

- **Indirect (F&A) Costs**

- **Definitions**

- **Matching Do's and Don'ts**

- **Matching Documentation**

- **Summary**

- **Contact Information**

Matching Regulations

- **Governing regulations are:**

- **Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-110 (found at 2 CFR Part 215)**

  - **Sub-part C: Post Award Requirements, Financial and Program Management**

  - **Section 23. Cost Sharing or matching**

  - **http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/ombcirculars.html**

- **USDA 7 CFR Part 3019**

  - **Section 3019.23 Cost Sharing or Matching**

  - **http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/fedregulations.html**

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Programmatic Requirements

- **Program requires 25% match in cash, in-kind or third-party contributions**

- **Program funds may only be used for education, training, outreach and mentoring of beginning farmers and ranchers.**

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Programmatic Requirements

- **Federal or matching funds may not be used:**
  - **For the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility.**
  - **To buy land or purchase equipment to start farm or ranch businesses**
  - **To match Individual Development Account funds**
  - **For research activities**

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Indirect (F&A) Costs

- **Maximum amount allowable:**
  - **22% of Total Federal Funds Awarded OR**
  - **Federally approved negotiated rate**
    - **Whichever is the lesser dollar amount**
  - **A Federal rate must be in place**
    - **No Rate? A billing rate may be established with the submission of appropriate documentation**

Definitions

- **Cash Matching: The recipient's cash outlay, including the outlay of money contributed to the recipient by non-Federal third-parties**

  - **Examples: The recipient's cost to purchase materials for use on the project; Salaries for staff time committed to project; project-related travel for staff**

Definitions

- **In-Kind Contribution: The value of non-cash contributions of property or services.**
  - **Examples: Project-related use of facilities, use or donation of equipment, supplies, and other non-expendable property.**

Definitions

- **Third Party Matching**: Any contribution to the project by an organization other than the recipient.
  - Can include cash or in-kind contributions.

Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Entire amount of required matching must be secured at time of award**

- **No "contingencies" allowed (i.e. Pending approval, submission, or earning)**

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Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Funds used as matching for the BFRDP:**
  - **Cannot be used as matching for another Federally-assisted project or program**
  - **May not be provided by another Federal agency**
  - **Must be for costs that are normally allowable under the Program and the applicable cost principles - OMB Circulars A-21 or A-122**
  - **Must be for costs incurred specifically for project during project period**

Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Unrecovered indirect costs may NOT be used as matching**

- **Funds provided from another organization for another, similar project cannot be used as matching**

- **Volunteer time should be valued at normal and customary rate for service provided**

  - **Provide documentation or references on how these rates were determined**

Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Value of loaned or donated equipment should not exceed its fair rental or market value**

- **The value of equipment <u>previously</u> purchased by, or donated to the recipient may not be used as matching**
  - **The purchase or donation must be <u>specifically</u> for the project**

Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Value of donated space or land (usage) should not exceed the fair rental value of comparable space or land as established by an independent appraisal of similar space in the same area.**

  - **Value is not based on purchase price**

<u>Matching Do's and Don'ts</u>

- **Provide references or documentation of how space or land usage was valued**

- **Charging for use of equipment, space, or land would not be allowed if organization does not normally charge for usage**

Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Charging for use of office space would not be allowable if organization has a negotiated indirect cost rate or a billing rate which includes the cost of the space in the indirect cost pool**

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Matching Documentation

- **Recipient Matching Documentation:**
  - **Letter of Commitment signed by the Authorized Representative (AR) may be required if matching information was not included in, or changed from what was in the original proposal**
    - **Must include the total dollar amount of the commitment, the dates of involvement (project period), and title of project**

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Matching Documentation

- **Recipient Matching Documentation (cont'd):**
  - **A separate Budget Justification should be included with the required detailed information on matching costs**
    - **How are matching funds being spent?**

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Matching Documentation

- **Third-Party Contributions:**
  - **Cost-sharing commitments by a Third-Party must include Pledge Agreement from the contributing organization's AR, counter-signed by the recipient organization's AR.**
    - **Counter-signature not required if submitted with the proposal through Grants.gov application**
  - **Pledge Agreement should also state whether the matching is cash or in-kind**

Matching Documentation

- **A separate Pledge Agreement is required for each donor organization and must:**

  - **Be submitted on donor organization letter head with the name, address, and telephone of organization**

  - **Include the signature and title of the donor Organization's AR**

  - **Include a statement whether the donation will be cash or in-kind and provide cost details**

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Matching Documentation

- **Pledge agreements must :**
  - **Include the <u>title of project</u> for which the donation is being made**
  - **State the <u>total dollar amount</u> or good faith estimate of the donation or contribution**
  - **Include a statement the donation will be made during the grant period of <u>(dates)</u> or include the dates the donor organization will be involved**

Matching Documentation

- **Third Party Cash Contributions:**
  - **Project costs to be incurred and paid by the Third Party**
    - **Include information on how the funds will be spent (i.e. salary, travel, materials and supplies – provide details on costs)**

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Matching Documentation

- **Third Party Cash and In-Kind Contributions:**
  - **Recipient organization should show third-party contributions in "Other Direct Cost" section of the budget and budget narrative**
  - **If recipient organization is using the third-party cash match to pay for own expenses (i.e. salaries, travel, etc.) details on how funds are being spent must be provided**
    - **Same level of details required as for Federal funds.**

Summary

- **It is important that all matching is documented with letters of commitment and cost justifications for both recipient and Third-party donors.**

- **The sources and amounts of all matching should be summarized as part of the budget justification as a separate narrative**

  - **Do not combine the matching cost justification with the Federal funds justification**

Summary

- **An award cannot be issued until all required matching has been verified as allowable, reasonable and <u>secured</u>.**

- **Some matching may be deemed unallowable during the review process requiring additional matching resources.**

- **Projects not meeting the matching requirement will not be funded.**

Questions?

Team Leaders:

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Questions # 2

- Are there questions on the application process?

What is the Pre-Acceptance Review Process?

Grants.gov screening

- Check package for errors before submitting using screen tool in grants.gov

- Expect acknowledgment within 2 days.

NIFA screening

- Screening for Pdf, program priorities, mandatory forms, time periods, duration, budget, page limits, etc.

- Late submission will be rejected without review

- Contact NPL if you do not receive an email within 4 weeks of proposal acceptance by grants.gov or submission deadline

- Keep program updated of any change in email address.

What is the Competitive Review Process?

- **Review process is designed to be fair and unbiased**

  - Review by peers and other experts

    - provide written and/or verbal evaluations

  - Evaluation factors are very important

  - Only information submitted with application is used

- **Understanding the review process helps with preparation of a successful proposal.**

Review Process – Contd.

- **Role of Panelist**
  - Review 15-20 proposals
  - Provide constructive and unbiased evaluation
  - Protect confidentiality
  - Avoid Conflicts of Interest

- **Confidentiality**
  - Proposal content and identity of applicant
  - Reviewer identity
  - Reviews (shared with PD only)
  - Panel proceedings

Evaluation Criteria – pages 31 & 34

- Relevancy

- Technical merit – necessity, innovation, alternatives available, expected outcome, sustainability beyond grant period

- Achievability – outcomes based plan

- Expertise and track record of 1 or more applicants – multi-year track record

- Adequacy of personnel, facilities, equipment

- Adequacy of management plans.

- Additional Criteria for Renewal and Resubmitted Applications

Question # 3

- Are there questions on the application review process?

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Elements Common To Successful Proposals

- Well written, succinct and logical

- Has all the information requested – letters, documentation of matching, management plan, etc.

- Includes thorough review of other projects

- Addresses important problem – target audience

- Innovative approach

- Well designed and detailed plan of identifying, recruiting and delivering education

- If successful, would have a big impact on farming

- Strong management plan

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Elements Common To Successful Proposals

- Date on prior experience and success is provided

- Partners are clearly involved, receive more than 25% of the budget

- Strong evaluation plan, has good plan for outcomes based reporting

- Needs of limited resource, socially disabled, and farm workers are considered – not needed in all applications

Common Proposal Criticisms

- Missing forms; not in pdf; matching not documented; etc.
- Poorly written and presented – does not follow sequence
- Too vague and unfocused
- PD lacks necessary experience/expertise
- Insufficient review of other projects – abstracts of funded projects
- Insufficient justification for project
- Can not be completed in time frame
- Lacks letters from consultants, partners, etc.
- Target audience not identified, justified, no prior experience serving this audience, etc.
- Weak management plan
- Unlikely to have an impact.

BFRDP Program Information

- Outcomes of projects funded in FY 2009 is at:

http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/pdfs/bfrdp_2010_outcomes.pdf

- BFRDP Clearinghouse can be accessed at:

http://www.start2farm.gov/

- BFRDP Information, including previous stakeholder feedback and and other resources for applicants:

http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html

Question #4

- General questions and comments:

  - As we don't have a Farm Bill, don't know whether the program will be offered in FY 2013.

  - But stakeholder input is _always_ welcome and can be emailed to the National Program Leaders or to RFP-OEP@nifa.usda.gov – by April 22, 2012.

  - Please check website for regular updates:

    http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html

Thank you

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